

H.J. HEINZ COMPANY FACTORIES  
(Heinz Lofts)  
300 Heinz Street  
Pittsburgh  
Allegheny County  
Pennsylvania

HAER PA-639  
*PA-639*

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

# HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

## H.J. HEINZ COMPANY FACTORIES (Heinz Lofts)

HAER No. PA-639

LOCATION: 300 Heinz Street, Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania.

UTM: 17.585380E.4478620N, Pittsburgh West Quad, Pennsylvania

DATES OF  
CONSTRUCTION: 1915, 1926, 1930, 1958, 2003-2005

ARCHITECTS: Heinz Engineering Department, Albert Kahn, Maurice Trimble

PRESENT OWNER: The Ferchill Group

SIGNIFICANCE: Henry J. Heinz revolutionized the food processing industry and built his business into a global conglomerate from this site beginning in 1888. The industrial complex documented here represents the second generation of this factory. These structures date from the 1915-30s, including one by Albert Kahn, wrapped in the Romanesque Revival style favored by the founder. Part of the complex was sold by the Heinz Corporation, and converted into the Heinz Lofts apartments in 2003-05 using federal tax credits.

DESCRIPTION: The historic Heinz Company factories occupy property along the Allegheny River in the Northside neighborhood of Pittsburgh, bounded by River Avenue to the south, the former Pennsylvania Railroad tracks to the north, Chestnut Street to the west, and South Canal Street to the east. The buildings photographed in 2005 date from the second generation of the Heinz plant, constructed from 1915 to 1926. The facades of these buildings generally followed the aesthetic set by the earlier buildings: rusticated red sandstone base supporting red brick walls five to eight stories in the Romanesque Revival style. The interiors consist of steel posts and concrete deck flooring.

The **Meat Products Building** was designed in 1920 by architect Robert Maurice Trimble, and completed in 1923. The building is seven stories high with a nine-story corner tower with a peaked roof, and extends nine bays on the south elevation and five bays on the west end. Rusticated red sandstone supports a four-story arcade. The sixth floor parapet is topped with corbelling. The west end is punctured by a two story pedestrian bridge that connects to the Service and Auditorium Building. It is faced

with a two-story brick arcade below a corbelled cornice dating from 1930. The Meat Building originally processed spaghetti and meat sauce, and later made meat-based soups and baby products. It is now part of the Heinz Lofts complex.

The **Cereal Building** (1926) is located on the southwest corner of the property at Heinz and Progress streets. It was designed in the Romanesque Revival style by Albert Kahn, and is a steel frame structure seventeen-bays long by five-bays wide. A rusticated sandstone base supports a three story roman arcade separated by heavy masonry piers with stone columns. There is a corbelled pediment atop the fifth floor. The northwest corner features tourelles and the name "Heinz" spelled out in relief lettering in the brickwork. The original tower was removed in the 1950s and reconstructed in the 2003 renovation. The building once processed dried breakfast cereals, and now serves as the main gathering place of the Heinz Lofts complex, offering services such as a café, business center, and fitness center.

The **Shipping Building** (1915) is located on the northwest corner of the property adjacent to the Pennsylvania Railroad right of way and Heinz Street. The Heinz engineering office designed the building under the supervision of H. J. Heinz himself in, utilizing bricks from Heinz's father's brickyard. It is five story steel frame structure faced in heavy masonry, twenty-one bays long by seven bays wide, with articulated corners. There is a three-story base; the ground floor is rusticated sandstone up to the sill, the second and third stories are of brick articulated with recessed channels every sixth course. The next two stories feature a Roman arcade, separated by thick masonry piers with stone capitals. The south- and northwest corners originally featured decorative peaked towers, and large HEINZ signs faced the long elevations, that were removed in the 1950s. As a result of the renovation, new double-hung windows replaced glass block installed in the 1950s. Originally used for shipping by rail and truck, dock door openings remain for loading on the north and south sides. Bridges to the Meat and Bean buildings remain, as part of the Heinz Loft complex.

The **Reservoir Building** (1926) faces River Avenue to the south of the Cereal Building. It was designed inhouse by the Heinz engineering office, and is nine bays long by five bays wide. Its exterior complements the other buildings built in this period, but is a stripped down version. It does have a rusticated sandstone base with brick rectangular window openings, but lacks an arcade, arches, recessed bays, and corbelling. The structure served as a water reservoir, and provided water and electrical service for the complex. It has been converted into lofts.

The **Service Building** (1930), while not shown in photographs, is connected to the Meat Products Building by a two-story bridge. It is another Heinz building designed by Albert Kahn, and constructed by the George A. Fuller Company in the Romanesque Revival style. Built for employee services, it remains part of the Heinz Corporation.

The **Riley Research Center** (1958) sits adjacent to the east end of the Cereal and Reservoir buildings. The six-story glass and steel tower was designed by Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill in the International Style. It remains part of the Heinz Corporation.

#### HISTORY:

Howard John Heinz began making horseradish in his family's basement in Sharpsburg, Pennsylvania, in 1869. After a brief setback, he began to successfully produce ketchup and a variety of pickled products. He started purchasing property on the Allegheny River in 1884 with river and rail access, which would become home to a large-scale food processing complex. The H.J. Heinz Co.'s Pittsburgh headquarters grew in four major stages over the next one hundred twenty years, while the company was also expanding internationally.

In 1888, H.J. Heinz supervised construction of the factories himself, using bricks from his father's brickyard. By 1906, over twenty buildings were used in the production of a variety of food products including pickles, ketchup, vinegar, relishes, baked beans and soups, inspiring the Heinz' trademark, "57 varieties." The buildings were built of timber post-and-beam "fireproof" construction, sheathed in brick in the Romanesque Revival style that was popular at the time. A new era of expansion began in 1906 when Heinz hired Albert Kahn, the influential industrial architect, to design a new administration building. While retaining Heinz's preferred brick Romanesque exteriors, the interiors of these large buildings were constructed with a steel skeleton and concrete floors and walls. This expansion period (1906-1930) began under H. J. Heinz, who died in 1919, and continued under his son, Howard Covode Heinz, and represents the era documented for this project.

H. J. Heinz II succeeded his father, Howard Covode, after his death in 1941, and oversaw the third era of modernization. In 1947, he implemented the "Pittsburgh Plan," which called for replacing and updating existing buildings, and constructing new buildings in the International Style, including the Riley Research Center in 1958. This resulted in removing the corner towers on several buildings and replacing existing windows with glass block.

Beginning in 1990, Heinz USA expanded to the east with the construction of a 138,000 sf soup and baby food processing plant and in 1999, with a 70,000 sf shipping warehouse.<sup>1</sup> In the meantime, food processing in the 1920s era buildings had ceased. Five buildings were purchased by the Ferchill Group of Cleveland in 2001, and converted to lofts using rehabilitation tax credits, opening in 2005. The buildings received reconstructed corner towers and new windows, in an effort to resemble their original appearance, as part of the \$70 million project.

SOURCES: Franklin Toker. Buildings of Pittsburgh. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007.  
Karen Borland and Diana Wellman, Sandvick Architects. H.J. Heinz Company. Washington, D.C.: National Register Form, 2001.  
The Ferchill Group, <http://ferchillgroup.com/heinz2.shtml>, accessed 11/22/2006.  
Heinz Lofts website, <http://www.heinzlofts.com/Apartments>, accessed 11/22/2006.

PROJECT INFORMATION: This short-form history was prepared to supplement photographic documentation of historic sites in western Pennsylvania. In 2005 Nicholas Traub photographed several sites for the *Buildings of Western Pennsylvania* publications, with funding from HABS/HAER/HALS. The Society of Architectural Historians cosponsored the photography project and is producing two volumes, *Buildings of Pittsburgh* and *Buildings of Pennsylvania: Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania* as part of their *Buildings of the United States* series published by the University of Virginia Press. The documentation was facilitated by Lu Donnelly, Project Director, Buildings of Western Pennsylvania, for the Heinz Architectural Center at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh. The documentation was edited and transmitted in the Washington office of HABS/HAER/HALS by Christopher H. Marston, HAER Architect.

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<sup>1</sup> The Pittsburgh Wool Company was demolished to make room for this expansion, and the site was documented by HAER in 2000. See HAER No. PA-572.